

HONORS COLLEGE PROJECT PROPOSAL

As a member of the Honors College, you are required to complete an Honors project. This project permits you to build on your experiences throughout your college career and develop a unique product (paper or creative work). The project qualifies for three credits of Honors 499 and is graded. For more specific information see the *Guide for the Senior Honors Thesis* available from the Honors College.

The first step in undertaking an Honors project is to identify a topic and a BSU faculty member who will serve as your project advisor. If you need help developing your proposal, finding a topic, or identifying a project advisor, you are welcome to discuss possibilities with Dean James Ruebel, Associate Dean Joanne Edmonds, or Honors Fellow Barbara Stedman. Alternatively, if you have already determined a topic and found an advisor, you may wish to bring this completed form with you for your thesis conference. *At least one conference with Drs. Ruebel, Edmonds, or Stedman is a required part of the project process.*

Make your appointment for this conference by phoning the Honors College at 5-1024.

Please provide the following information:

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Major(s) English Education Graduation date Dec. 2007 (e.g. Spring '03)
Academic Advisor Patrick Collier Project Advisor Mark Malaby ✓
Title of Honors Project City Schooling

Please type or print all information requested. Write clearly and concisely. Explain all abbreviations and technical terminology. Check your spelling! (You may do this on a separate form if you wish, and you may combine answers to the questions below.)

- The Honors project should broaden your educational experience through independent work that adds to your knowledge and develops your talents. How will your project help you accomplish these objectives and add to your personal goals? Why, in short, do you want to do this particular project?
I hope to teach in an inner city school, and this project will help me understand the skills needed to teach in those schools. I also want to publish a novel or short story someday and this project will challenge me as a writer.
- When are you signing up for HONRS 499 (or what is the proposed equivalent)?
Fall 2006
- What will be the outcome of this project? (Be specific—e.g., a paper, finished piece of research, creative activity...)
It will be short story based on fiction.

-OVER-

4. **Objective or Thesis** (include target audience, purpose):

My short story about an inner city school will make current Education majors aware of the conditions of these schools, and the need for teachers and improvement.

5. **Project Description** (please be specific—approximately two paragraphs):

In my thesis project, I will investigate the conditions of inner city schools. I will research schools in Chicago, arrange for a visit day, and interview teachers and students. These interviews will serve as a basis for a short story, so no names or personal information will be revealed.

Based on my research, I will write a fictitious short story about a day in an inner city school from a teacher's perspective, and will attempt to publish it.

6. **State what the importance or implications of this project are.** What do you expect to learn, or what would others learn from knowing about your anticipated results?

I expect to learn what teaching in an inner-city school would be like. I hope that this will prepare me for a future career in those schools.

Joacqueline Dulan 5/3/06
Student's Signature Date

Nash Maly 4/4/06
Project Advisor's Signature* Date

[Signature] 5/3/06
Honors College Approval Date

*Your signature indicates that you have read and approved this proposal.

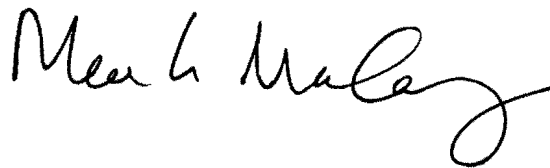
Teaching in the Inner-City

An Honors Thesis (HONRS 499)

By

Jacqueline Dulian

Thesis Advisor
Mark Malaby

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Mark H. Malaby". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Mark" and last name "Malaby" clearly legible, and a middle initial "H." written in a smaller, more compact script.

Ball State University

December 2007

December 15, 2007

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Abstract

Many negative stereotypes exist about inner-city schools. These stereotypes portray a chaotic environment where students are disrespectful, violent acts occur on a regular basis, and drug deals are made in the bathroom. Stereotypes are not the truth. They are exaggerations without a solid foundation. I have always wanted to pursue a career in an inner-city school due to the diversity and the opportunity to make a difference. However, my plan to teach in an inner-city school was met with criticism and disbelief by the majority of my friends, family members, and acquaintances. Most of the critics have never been to an inner-city school but have based their opinions on stereotypes that they have heard. I wrote a series of vignettes to describe the events that led to my decision to pursue a career in an inner-city school and to break down the stereotypes that skew the image of these schools.

Acknowledgments

I want to thank Dr. Mark Malaby for advising me in this project. He helped me to analyze the topic and provided helpful feedback throughout the writing process.

I would also like to thank Cathy Ralston for her help in the brainstorming process and her encouragement to pursue a career in an inner-city school.

Dreaming about Someday.....

A crisp Chicago breeze ruffled the orange and red leaves strewn on the freshly paved alley and caused them to twirl and flutter.

The quiet alley, tucked safely behind the stout brick houses, hosted many games of basketball, hopscotch, jump rope, and four-square.

A.J. bounced the basketball between his legs and then spun to the right, as graceful as the dancing leaves.

"When I grow-up I'm going to play in the NBA with Michael Jordan!" he shouted.

"I'm going to be a fireman when I grow-up," David replied.

"I'm going to be a chef, like mommy," Jessie chimed in as she played hopscotch.

I twirled around in circles in the middle of the alley and proclaimed, "When I grow up, I'm going to change the world."

David and A.J. burst out laughing and Jessie smiled and looked away.

"I will, you'll see," I declared and stomped away angrily.

Two Worlds Collide.....

The notebook lay open on the kitchen table.

Phone numbers for various Chicago public high schools were scrawled across the page.

"What's wrong with that one?" I pointed to a page.

"Just like the other one," my dad muttered.

"What about that one?" I pointed to the next one on the list.

"JACQUELINE! They are all the same!" My dad said in exasperation.

I sighed.

"Different schools."

"Different teachers."

"Different students."

"Different programs."

"Different neighborhoods."

I saw diversity.

"Bad neighborhoods."

"Gangs."

"Drugs."

"Hoodlums."

He saw negativity and uniformity.

And offered the same old request.

"Why can't you just teach in the suburbs?"

I offered the same old response.

"I want to teach in the city."

"Jacqueline, you don't belong there."

"I won't know unless I give it a chance."

"It is not safe."

"Stop being so protective and let me make my own decisions."

"I didn't raise a daughter just to lose her to a world of drugs and crime and people who are just wasting away."

"I wish that you could just be proud that you raised a daughter who wants to make a difference in a world full of drugs and crime and people who aren't given many opportunities."

"The students in those neighborhoods all drop-out; they don't care about school."

"They just need someone to care about them," I said.

The battlefield was silent.

Each side worn out.

An impasse.

Always an impasse.

I will win this battle.

I will teach in the city.

I will make a difference in those students' lives.

He'll see.

Tim Colburn....

Tim Colburn flies high on his Harley.

His journey ends at a high school on the Southside of Chicago.

A long, red-brick building with narrow windows.

Many outsiders would see this building as a waste.

Tim sees hope and confidently saunters inside.

He smiles at students.

Nods at colleagues.

This is Tim's' world.

He opened his arms wide and Chicago's youth jumped in.

"Come and see our school," he beckons and stretches his hand towards me.

Our fingertips brush....miles apart....and a smile settles upon my lips.

The confident tone of his voice says, "I made it."

"You can, too."

So I float away towards that high school on the Southside.

To the world that my heart says I can belong in.

"Don't trust him," the angry voice says breaking through my reverie.

Trust?

"He says the school is good because it his school and he is biased."

And you aren't, Dad?

"I know what is best for you."

Your suburban world?

"It is YOUR suburban world, too."

Maybe.

And maybe not.

How can one world be mine when I haven't seen the other?

I'm coming Tim Colburn.

So that I can finally see the other world.

And figure out which is mine.

A Picture Worth a Thousand Words.....

My framed photograph sits on my dad's desk at the police station.

My dad points to it.

"She wants to teach on the Southside."

The policemen take a step closer to scrutinize the photo.

They see the wavy blonde hair.

The bright green eyes.

The wide smile.

The white skin.

They snicker and glance at each other with raised eyebrows.

"She won't make it."

"You won't make it," My dad says.

"Because the policemen said so?" I ask.

"They know more about those neighborhoods than you do," he says.

"Do they know me?" I ask.

"They saw your picture," he replies.

What did the picture show them?

My hope?

My determination?

They just saw my white skin.

A picture worth a thousand words.

All of them blank.

Mrs. Smith

"Let me tell you about Mrs. Smith," My dad says.

"Mrs. Smith works at the police station now.

With her old job she used to run errands all over Chicago.

Always scurrying here and there.

She had to go wherever they sent her.

To Wrigleyville.

To Lincoln Park.

And even to Cabrini Green.

Mrs. Smith would never forget that day.

She stared at her boss in horror.

Wondering if she had heard correctly.

"Cabrini Green," she mumbled in bewilderment.

"Cabrini Green," her boss stated and nodded her out of his office.

Mrs. Smith pulled on her heavy coat and headed off to the projects.

She hurried through her business.

Desperate to get done and get out of there.

She felt like she had the words, "I don't belong," stamped on her forehead.

And she was black.

In a black neighborhood.

The cab wouldn't even come back and pick her up.

Said they don't head out there.

So Mrs. Smith had to take the El back.

She said that she had never walked so fast before.

Mrs. Smith says she'll never go back.

I told her that you wanted to take her place.

Know what she said?

A white girl from the suburbs in a poor black neighborhood?"

"Well dad, you ask Mrs. Smith why it has to be so black and white."

Coffee and Reflection.....

Cathy glances at her two year-old daughter playing on the floor.

A stay-at-home mom.

A magazine editor.

A young white woman in a white suburb.

I baby-sit while she works in her office.

My goodbye always lasts at least twenty minutes.

We talk and talk and talk and talk.

She is the older sister that I never had.

I am the only person that she sees all day that does not wear a diaper and that is not her husband.

"Why do you think people from our neighborhood really don't go to the Southside," she asks.

She rushes on and does not wait for an answer.

"Is it fear of drugs and violence?"

"Or is it fear of the unknown?"

"The people here live in a world so different from that on the Southside."

"They don't understand it."

"So they buy into the stereotypes of those neighborhoods."

"The crack addicts wandering the streets."

"The drive-by shootings."

"Drug deals in the school bathrooms."

"More kids dropping out than graduating."

"Kids having kids."

"How do they know that is true if they don't even go there?" she asks.

"They don't," I finally reply.

"So you go and see what it is really like," she says.

"I will," I say.

Same old song and dance.....

Tim Colburn says, "I can't wait to see you tomorrow."

I lay out my clothes on my bed.

My dad stomps into my room.

"You aren't going," he says.

"Yes, I am," I say.

"It's not safe," he argues.

"I can get hit by a car here," I say.

"Going there would be like intentionally jumping in front of the car," he says.

I put my notebook in my bag.

"You and those students are from two completely different worlds."

I check to make sure that I have the school address and phone number.

"How can you save those kids if you can't even relate to them?" he asks.

I stop my preparations and look up.

I pictured myself marching into a black neighborhood and reforming it.

Teaching the students and turning them into model citizens.

We are both prejudiced, my dad and I.

He won't give them a chance because they are different.

I think that they need to be saved just because they are different.

I don't go.

Inner-city Indiana.....

Five hours from Chicago.

The students pile off the buses.

Black. White. Hispanic. Asian.

Nikes. Abercrombie. Hand-me downs. Polo shirts. Sagging pants.

Smiles and scowls.

I clutch my bag excitedly.

A student teacher.

Here to learn and to teach.

And to grow.

Taye

Taye wears a different pair of Nike shoes everyday.

His shoes always match his shirt.

"They help me jump as high as Michael Jordan," he says.

He is going to make it to the NBA someday.

Don't you know?

It doesn't matter that he is only five feet tall.

He doesn't need a back-up plan.

He doesn't need school.

He doesn't need me.

Taye walks into class and puts his head on his desk.

"Taye, don't you want to learn today?"

Taye scowls and grabs his book.

Taye earns B after B after B.

The B should be an A.

If only Taye cared.

Oh Taye, I try so much to make you care.

Taye rolls his eyes and walks away quickly.

Always quickly.

He says twenty-five percent of these kids are going to be locked up in five years anyway and so I shouldn't waste my time.

Oh, Taye I wish that you wouldn't feel that way.

I keep pushing.

Pushing Taye away from that twenty-five percent.

"Taye, why don't you try this problem?"

"Taye, why don't you read this?"

Little challenges pile up on Taye's desks.

Maybe one will lift Taye's head off of that desk.

Kara

Kara saunters into the classroom.

Clutching her folders and her book.

Head held high.

Eyes focused straight ahead.

She slides into her seat.

Pushes a wisp of silky black hair into her ponytail.

Tugs down the bottom of her blue polo shirt.

Anything to be busy.

And not bothered.

Class begins.

Kara sulks in the corner.

She picks up her folder and sets it down again.

Refusing to work.

Refusing to give in.

Still fuming over yesterday.

And her trip to the office to talk to the assistant principal.

She was right.

I was wrong.

There could be no other way to look at the issue.

I knelt down next to Kara.

I could be stubborn, too.

"Same attitude again today, Kara."

Kara's face slowly turns red.

Her brown eyes flash.

Her brown hand juts out and pushes her folder on the floor.

Papers flutter around Kara's desk.

And she explodes.

"This is fucking stupid!"

Twenty-five heads lift up and twenty-five mouths form into shocked little O's.

"Go in the hall, please." I say.

"This FUCKING sucks." Kara screams as she stomps out of the room.

Her shouts get louder and louder and louder.

I shut the door.

I don't want to see security come and take Kara away.

I want to pretend that she had stayed.

That she was still sitting here.

Head cocked to one side.

Deep in thought.

Hand raised.

A correct answer.

The smile of pride at a job well done on her lips.

That is the Kara I want to see.

Not the Kara that explodes.

Not the Kara that was taken away by the police because she was abusive towards her mother.

Kara you leave and then you come back again and then you leave again.

The same circle.

Round and round it goes.

Oh Kara, why do you fall apart?

I give Kara space.

And let her work at her own speed.

At her own comfort level.

Her grade gets better and better.

She begins to smile more then scowl.

The circle slowly unwinds.

Claudia

Claudia is fourteen.

She loves boys.

And make-up.

And new shoes.

She wishes that her hair was blonde instead of brown.

And that she was six feet tall instead of five feet tall.

And that she was a cheerleader instead of a band member.

Claudia completes all of her assignments.

She reads more books than any other student in the class.

But then there are those moments when Claudia just isn't Claudia.

She is no longer a fourteen year old model student.

Instead she is a fourteen year old kid with a temper tantrum.

Her alter ego throws her work on the floor.

Her lips jut out.

Her eyes grow hard.

I sigh as Claudia is sent to the hallway.

Claudia, where did you go?

I call her house to unravel the mystery.

Claudia's dad is dead.

Her mom lost custody.

Claudia had to go to court again yesterday.

Oh Claudia.

The next day Claudia is back.

Smiling and laughing.

Talking about boys and parties.

Claudia if only you could just worry about boys and parties.

Morgan

Morgan pushes her glasses up on her nose.

And pulls the hood of her sweatshirt over her head.

Arms crossed.

Slouched in her seat.

Morgan isn't her to work today.

She is here to smirk and tease.

A big bully.

Morgan why do you want to hurt the other students?

What made you so hard?

Don't you see how they look at you?

You could be a leader if you wanted to be one.

Morgan doesn't want to lead.

She wants to push everyone away.

Like her parents went away.

And left her with her grandparents.

She wishes she could leave to.

She could be something.

"But not here," she says.

Muncie is not for her.

She wants to live in Chicago and be a lawyer.

"I'm from Chicago," I say

Morgan smirks and says, "You're from the suburbs."

"Now I live in the suburbs but I grew-up in Chicago," I reply.

She sees what she wants to see and she can't see me in the city.

I can see her there though.

Someday.

All I can do is make her believe that she belongs there, too.

I greet Morgan everyday.

I recommend books to read.

I praise her work.

I push and I push and I push.

Slowly, Morgan uncrosses her arms.

And pulls the hood of her sweatshirt off her head.

And begins to believe that she can be more than just a bully.

And she will.

Morgan, you will.

Closing Time.....

Graduation looms ahead.

So close yet so far.

So many decisions to make.

I thought I had it all figured out.

I was wrong.

For three months I worked with students who people labeled as bad.

No respect.

They don't care.

They do drugs.

They don't come to school.

They won't amount to anything.

It doesn't have to be that way.

They can be so much.

I'm not here to save anyone.

But I can care and care and care and care.

So I will.

Now I'm ready to go back to the Southside.